

Thunderchild  
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KS

September 29, 2003

Food Guide Pyramid Reassessment Team  
USDA Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion  
3101 Park Center Drive, Room 1034  
Alexandria, VA 22302

To Whom It May Concern,

It is my understanding that you are currently accepting public comment as to the evolution of your federal food programs. I welcome the opportunity to contribute.

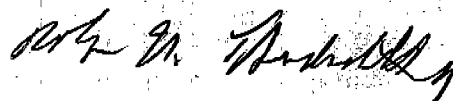
Without question, much has changed over time in the way we, as a society, view the tenets of a healthy diet. This is the inevitable result of improved scientific input, as well as a wealth of anecdotal evidence- the weight of which leans unmistakably in one direction. To put it simply, a plant-based diet is now recognized as the pillar of healthy consumption. Increasingly, studies show that the benefits of such a diet not only in support of longevity, but also quality of life, and defense against disease.

Speaking as a committed Vegan, I can tell you from my own experience that good health has directly accompanied my shift to a plant-based menu. Since we now know that meat and dairy products contribute to obesity, heart disease, and many forms of cancer, it would seem illogical to merely reduce the quantities of these substances in our diets, and those of our children. Rather, they should be eliminated.

I therefore strongly encourage you to move swiftly in the direction of plant-based dietary recommendations with regard to all federal food programs, and especially school lunch programs. We owe it to our children to serve only those foods which promote good health.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Robyn U. Thunderchild

Worthington, MA.

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Food Guide Pyramid Reassessment Team  
FDA Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion  
3101 Park Center Drive, Room 1034  
Alexandria, VA 22302

RE: Public Comments on the Food Pyramid Guide

Thank you for seeking public opinion on the Food Pyramid. As the dietary model behind federal food programs, including the National School Lunch Program, the Pyramid needs to evolve with nutrition science.

When the Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee convenes to review current policy, I hope they will emphasize the Vegetarian/Vegan Six Food Groups: Whole Grains and Starches, Legumes, Green and Yellow Vegetables, Nuts and Seeds, Fruits, Vitamin and Mineral Foods.

Present guidelines advise two to three daily servings of dairy products along with meat as a main protein source. While this plan successfully promotes the meat and dairy industries, it ignores numerous studies linking saturated fat and cholesterol in meat, eggs, and dairy products with heart disease, cancer and stroke—the top three killers in the U.S.

Dairy products alone are associated with obesity, high blood pressure, juvenile onset diabetes, prostate and breast cancers, allergies, nasal congestion and ear infections, according to the American Heart Association.

One of two Americans will die from heart disease. The excess saturated fat (mostly from animals) and cholesterol (entirely from animals) will be the cause in most cases. The American Dietetic Association claims that vegetarian diets reduce the risk for coronary artery disease, hypertension, diabetes mellitus, colorectal cancer, lung cancer, kidney disease, and obesity.

Children, in particular, deserve alternatives to the fatty fare on school lunch lines. In a 1999 American Heart Association Scientific Sessions report, one in six teenagers' hearts showed significant blockage and the arteries of five-year-olds were clogged with fatty patches. Veggie burgers, soy cold cuts and soy milks are great substitutes for corn dogs, pizzas and milkshakes.

The FDA links contaminated meat goods with six and a half million cases of food poisoning and six thousand deaths every year. Animal-based meals contain residues of growth-inducing hormones and antibiotics. In fact, antibiotic abuse on factory farms has led to what the scientific community labels Super-Bugs-Bacteria. SBB are resistant to current antibiotic therapies.

The Vegetarian/Vegan Six include all the essential carbohydrates, fats, protein, vitamins, minerals and water necessary for a balanced and healthy diet. They also prevent disease and obesity. Please revise the Food Guide Pyramid to reflect vegetarian sources of protein, calcium and other vital nutrients.

Thank you,

Mary Palisi  
Mary Palisi

Northampton, MA

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**THE BALANCED WEIGHT**  
**Linda Willis Ed. D.**

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Phone: [ ]  
Fax: [ ]  
Email: [ ]@ [ ]

◆◆ Grants Pass, Oregon ◆

March 31, 2003

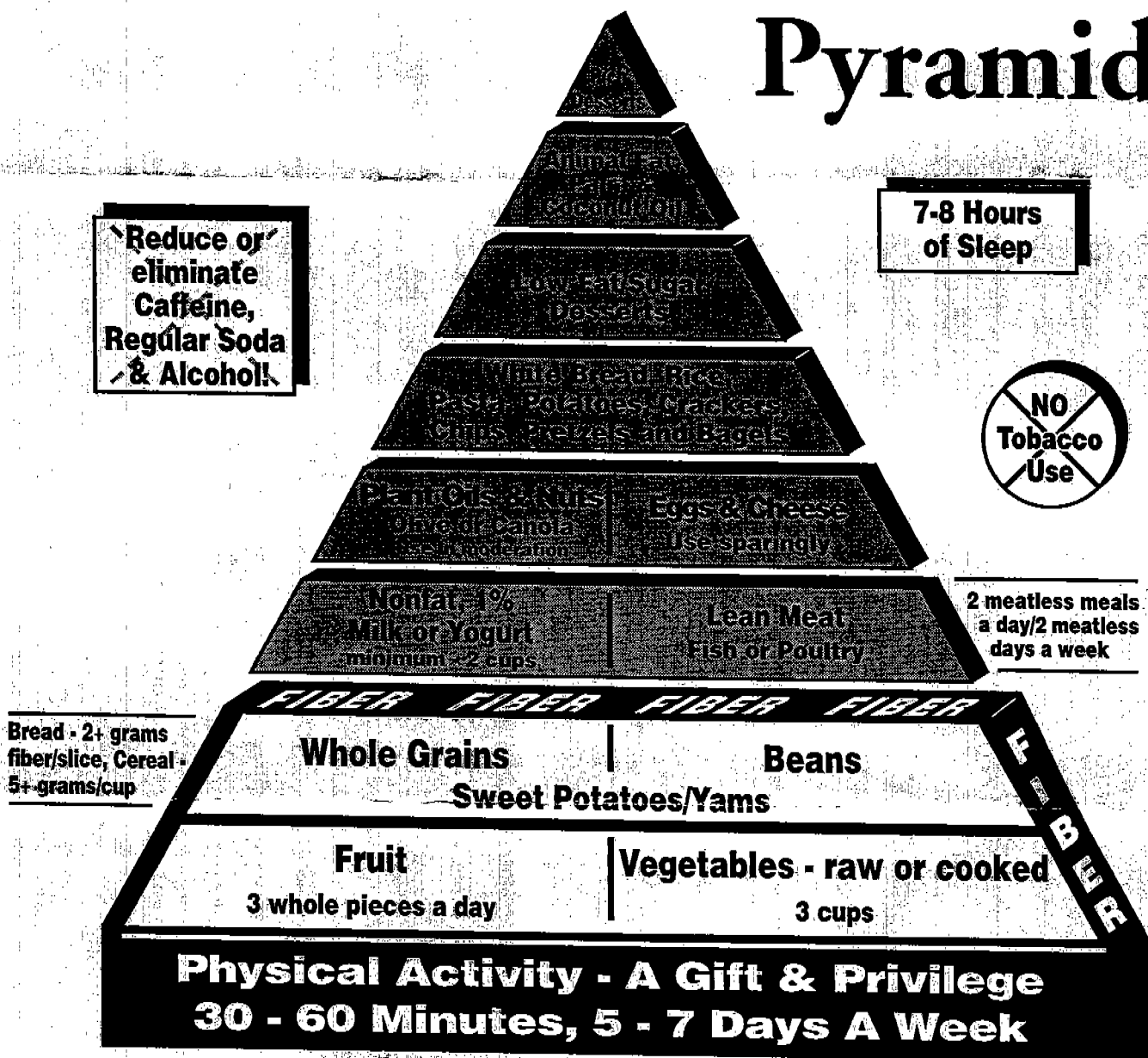
To: USDA Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion  
From: Dr. Linda Willis  
Date: March 31, 2003  
Subject: New Food Pyramid

I have worked in the field of nutrition, exercise physiology and weight management for 27 years in both higher education and a hospital setting. I recently redesigned the enclosed pyramid for use in my private practice of working with individuals who are dealing with overweight, high cholesterol, glucose, high blood pressure and any other lifestyle related health problem.

I am submitting it to further the work on needed improvements in the FDA pyramid and in response to your request for ideas. It has been well-received in our medical community and has proven to be an excellent teaching tool. It is a work in progress but clearly a move in the right direction.

Dr. Linda Willis

# Willis 20F2 Consider The BALANCED WEIGH Pyramid



This pyramid was designed by Linda Willis Ed. D. who is the instructor of The Balanced Weigh Health/Weight Management 7 week program.

#### Individual counseling available:

- Overweight
- High blood pressure
- High cholesterol
- High blood sugar
- Gastroesophageal problems (GERD)
- Compulsive eating
- Anorexia
- Bulimia
- Fitness program

Call 4 \_\_\_\_\_ or  
email \_\_\_\_\_

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September 28, 2003

Mr. Roberto Salazar  
Administrator  
USDA Food and Nutrition Service  
3101 Park Center Drive, Room 926  
Alexandria, VA 22302

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KT

Dear Mr. Salazar:

I read in the Post last week that the USDA was seeking public comment on the Food Pyramid, so here's my two cents' worth.

Does anyone outside your organization realize that virtually no one outside your offices knows what a "serving" means? I've asked dozens of people in the past week or two, and almost everyone thinks it means that you have to eat that many meals a day, each time serving the food that is listed. And since almost no one eats 4-5 meals a day (the number of servings that the pyramid often calls for), almost all those people decided they couldn't possibly comply with the guidelines, and consequently just ignore it altogether.

I once saw a big poster of the pyramid somewhere; in small print at the bottom I think it explained that what was meant by a "serving" was a certain weight of that food. If so, do you really believe that the average person carries around a little scale and weighs portions at each meal?

I'm an educated person with two college degrees, and I don't get it. Can you imagine how most people react (if, in fact, they even bother to notice)?

I don't mean to be negative, but if you really want to help people get better nutrition, you have to do a lot better than that.

  
Sheldon Greenberger

Washington, D.C.

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Dear USDA Official,

This is in response to the recent request for public comment regarding the USDA's nutrition guidelines, in particular the USDA Food Guide Pyramid. I believe the food pyramid is still relevant, however, some modifications are needed to address the problems associated with the rise in obesity and the increase in diet-related diseases.

For example, the number of daily servings of carbohydrates that form the base of the pyramid should be about equal to the number of servings of fruits and vegetables. Therefore, fruits, vegetables, and carbohydrates could be combined into one section. In addition, there should be some reference to emphasizing whole grains over processed.

The section of the pyramid devoted to proteins is split, with dairy products on one side, and all other proteins on the other. If a person were to follow the high end of the recommended servings in this category (i.e., three servings of dairy and three servings of other proteins), one would probably be consuming an excessive amount of protein. I would suggest changing the recommended servings for the non-dairy proteins from 2-3 per day to 1-2. In addition, legumes and soy products should be added to the non-dairy list, the term lean meat should be used instead of meat, milk should be described as low-fat, and yogurt should be listed as low-fat and plain.

Finally, the top of the pyramid needs additional information to provide consumers with a complete understanding of the different fats. It should be recommend that all hydrogenated and partially hydrogenated oils be avoided completely, including deep fried foods. Healthy oils, such as olive, sesame, and flaxseed oils should be emphasized, while corn, soy, safflower, palm, and sunflower oils should be minimized or avoided.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

Beth C Burchard

Beth C. Burchard

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Weber 10/2

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KT

Charles Weber

Hendersonville NC

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Food Guide Pyramid Reassessment Team  
USDA Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion  
3101 Park Center Drive, Room 1034  
Alexandria, VA 22302

Dear Sirs;

I am convinced that the food pyramid has it reversed for carbohydrates. The bulk of people's calories should come from vegetables, not from grains. Vegetables are more nutritious than grains and are noticeably more difficult to degrade. However a large part of why I think vegetables should be stressed over grains is their much higher potassium content per calorie. The leafy vegetables routinely run more than 7 milligrams per Calorie to whole grains two. Potassium is never added to grain white flour and is difficult to supplement because of the fear of potassium by the medical profession. Yet potassium is one of the most important deficiencies in our society, and is almost certainly a major factor in most types of heart disease. The minimum daily requirement (assuming no diarrhea, perspiration, emotional stress, sodium bicarbonate baking powder, etc.) is 2,000 milligrams per day for a young adult [Consolazio] [see; [http://members.tripod.com/~charles\\_W/arthritis8.html](http://members.tripod.com/~charles_W/arthritis8.html) ]. Compare this to 1,500 milligrams per day for black people in Georgia [Grim], with half of them receiving less than this, even. I have included a printout of the above article as well as this article on obtaining potassium from food from; [http://members.tripod.com/~charles\\_W/arthritis9.html](http://members.tripod.com/~charles_W/arthritis9.html) .

It is also essential that potassium be attained in food because if it is attained by supplements, a number of people would be very adversely affected, such as those who are suffering from a vitamin B-1 deficiency. Such people will not get the "wet" heart disease of beri-beri if potassium is deficient, judging by animal experiments. It is probable that people who eat wine or vinegar fermented with sulfite, which degrades vitamin B-1 in the intestines, could have a B-1 deficiency. Other unknown imbalances are conceivably possible with other nutrients. To expect a housewife to buy food lacking in nutrition or hopelessly oversupplied with individual nutrients and then go out and exactly adjust intake with supplements when the best dieticians in the world can not, is dream like.

Vegetables have one minor disadvantage. Most contain one mild poison or another, but this is easily circumvented by making sure the diet is varied with respect to vegetables.

When describing the nutritional value of individual vegetables, or any other food for that matter, it is far preferable to describe the nutrient as weight per calorie rather than as per portion. "Portion" is a meaningless concept. Portions vary grossly in size so that comparisons are impossible. Portions make no allowance for water content or additions of high calorie low nutrients like oil, for instance. Dried apricots are often touted as a good source of potassium, for instance, but each apricot's potassium content is exactly

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the same as fresh apricots even though the amount of dried apricots in a cupful is much greater. You may see a table computed from the USDA handbook #8 expressing foods in potassium per calorie at: [http://members.tripod.com/~charles\\_W/table2.html](http://members.tripod.com/~charles_W/table2.html) Potatoes are much more nourishing per calorie baked than they are fried in oil, to give another example.

If people used the current food pyramid as a guide and made sure to eat none of it processed, they would probably get 3,500 milligrams of potassium per day. That should be enough potassium to keep most people in vibrant health. However, if they used the pyramid which I proposed above, it is not at all impossible that they might attain as much as double that. Now 3,000 or 3,500 might be more than enough for young healthy adults, but it might well be a marginal spectrum of food for old people [Dall, et al], sedentary people, people with diarrhea, people on a diet, people with a hormone defect, people correcting the low cell potassium in rheumatoid arthritis [La Celle], etc. So to be sure to cover almost everybody, the most nutritious food should be placed in the large part of the pyramid and would be in order to so recommend, in my opinion.

#### REFERENCES

Consolazio CF et al 1963 Excretion of sodium, potassium, magnesium, and iron in human sweat and the relation of each to balance and requirements. *Journal Nutrition* 79; 407.

Dall & Gardner HS 1971 Dietary intake of potassium by geriatric patients. *Gerontol. Clinic* 13; 119-124.

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Grim CE, Luft FC, Miller JZ, Meneely GR, Battarbee HD, Hames CG, Dahl LK 1980 **Racial differences in blood pressure in Evans County, Georgia: relationship to sodium and potassium intake and plasma renin activity.** *J Chronic Dis.* 33(2):87-94.

LaCelle PL et al 1964 An investigation of total body potassium in patients with rheumatoid arthritis. *Proceedings of the Annual Meeting of the American Rheumatism Association, Arthritis and Rheumatism* 7; 321.